Launch of the AFRAN-Agrifood hub in Canberra

On 30 April 2025, France and Australia created a research community on agriculture and food matters, through a seminar gathering close to 100 attendees.

Agriculture plays an important role in Australia and France in political, economic, geographical, and sociocultural terms. Although the two countries have developed very different production models (family farming geared towards processing in France, large-scale agriculture for commodity exports in Australia), they face similar challenges:

- Increasing production to feed a growing world population;
- Adapting food systems to the effects of climate change and biosecurity threats;
- Transitioning to more sustainable food systems with less impact on the environment and climate;
- Reducing food loss and waste;
- Maintaining the attractiveness and profitability of the agricultural and agri-food sector;
- Enabling fair, rules-based international trade that preserves local production and cultures.

France and Australia already cooperate on agricultural research, thanks in particular to four partnerships that INRAe has established with leading Australian organizations: the CSIRO (Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation), the Australian National University, the University of Melbourne, and the University of Queensland. These partnerships, which cover a wide range of topics, facilitate mobility of researchers, and develop international

laboratories on specific issues (stable isotopes, wheat adaptation to environmental changes, etc.).

> *However, there are opportunities to go further: reducing food loss and waste, developing technical and technological solutions, rolling out the "One Health" approach in the Pacific, and emphasizing the sociocultural role of agriculture and food.*



Keynote speakers – French Ambassador



Agricultural Advisor



Président of AFRAN

To this end, the Embassy (Counsellor for agricultural affairs and Department of Scientific Collaboration) and the Franco-Australian Research Association (AFRAN), which has 1,200 members, organised a one-day seminar held at the French Residence on April 30. Attended by nearly 100 people, including 70 in person, it featured speeches by the Ambassador, the CEO and Chair of INRAe, and the President of AFRAN, as well as posters, and was structured around three panels:

- Main challenges for sciences in agri-food: Australian & French perspectives;
- Research and innovation for post-farmgate challenges: food waste and negotiations between actors in the chain;
- One Health: Agricultural sciences in our changing world; with a presentation of the PREZODE initiative.

These panels highlighted many points, the main ones being the need to structure research in a cross-disciplinary manner to avoid silo approaches; continue research and innovation (particularly genetic) to develop capacity of production; work on skills development to ensure the availability of workforce; demonstrate the economic benefits of the “One Health”

approach, particularly in the Pacific, highlighting the knowledge of indigenous communities; develop tools to compensate farmers for agroecosystem services; and maintain a balance between technological solutions and agroecological practices.



Video speech by the CEO and Chair of INRAe

International cooperation was seen by all participants as an essential lever for scientific and technical progress.



Signing of the renewal of the INRAe-CSIRO

agreements

The seminar was also an opportunity to strengthen the network by launching the agri-food research community within AFRAN, which now facilitates the mobilisation of researchers in these sectors. This community is coordinated by Dr. Jean-François HOCQUETTE (INRAe) on the French side and Dr. Andy SHEPPARD (CSIRO) on the Australian side. Finally, during the seminar, INRAe signed several partnerships:

- *With CSIRO: renewal of the MoU on cooperation and the Joint Linkage Call (a program facilitating mobility of researchers between the two organisations);*

- *With the University of Queensland: launch of an international associated laboratory on wheat adaptation to environmental changes.*

All information on the seminar and the AFRAN agrifood community is available at this link: Agricultural and Food Sciences | AFRAN

Photos: credits French Embassy.

Photo caption at the top of this article : Discussion on the "One Health" approach

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